

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE A-14WASHINGTON POST
6 February 1985

Remorse and Defiance Close Polish Murder Trial

By Bradley Graham
Washington Post Foreign Service

WARSAW, Feb. 5—In final speeches at the close of one of the Soviet Bloc's most remarkable trials, three secret police agents charged with murdering a Polish priest voiced remorse today over the killing, while their superior, a former colonel, insisted on his innocence and asked to be acquitted of accusations that he instigated the crime.

Adjourning this afternoon, the chief judge of the provincial court in Torun where the five-week hearing has taken place said a verdict would be announced Thursday. He added, without elaborating, that the court reserved the right to alter the indictment, hinting at a possible reduction in some charges when the judgment is given.

The trial has been unusual because of the widespread publicity it has received here in Poland and the insights it has given into the working of the country's secret police.

In the confident, composed manner that he has shown during much of the trial, Grzegorz Piotrowski, who faces a possible death sentence for leading the team that killed the Rev. Jerzy Po-

pieluszko last October, disputed insinuations by the prosecution that he may have been in the pay of western intelligence services, as well as other suggestions that the Soviets had ordered the priest murdered. He expressed sorrow that his actions had served the interests of Poland's enemies by harming communist authorities.

"I'm not paralyzed by guilt to the point where I can quietly and humbly accept any charge, any false accusation," declared the former police captain, now stripped of his officer's rank. "Even in the shadows of the gallows, I do not say it is raining when someone spits."

He said the two western cars he owns—which the prosecution implied may have been obtained as payoffs for aid to groups hostile to Poland—are old wrecks.

"Perhaps I should be considered the cheapest agent in the history of spying," he quipped.

He insisted, as he had earlier, that the priest's death was not intended when the kidnaping began on a road north of Torun. Calling the killing "an act of madness," Piotrowski added: "It was a terrible mistake and the consequences were foreseeable. I should have foreseen them. But I did not want to push my homeland into chaos, and my comrades in the service as well as my

enemies surely know this, although the latter are drawing satisfaction from what happened."

Piotrowski's calmness contrasted with the tearful, grief-stricken appearances of the two former lieutenants who were with him on the kidnap mission.

Leszek Pekala told the court he was deeply sorry for the tragedies caused Popieluszko's family and the Polish authorities and asked for punishment that "will allow me to return to society to attempt to repay with honest work the wrong I've done." Waldemar Chmielewski, sobbing uncontrollably, blamed his superiors at the Interior Ministry for exploiting his faith in them, as well as himself for letting himself be used.

Adam Pietruszka, the veteran officer who had supervised the others and is charged with aiding and abetting them in the murder, said he was unhappy about the "great political damage" the deed had caused Poland, but stood by previous testimony that he had known nothing about the plot.

Seeming to reinforce his boss' claim of innocence, Piotrowski today said of Pietruszka: "I have no reason to like him and to protect him, but I wish to stress . . . he never ordered me to commit a crime and I never treated his words as an order to commit a crime."